

award year 2006-2007 by \$200 to \$4,250, notwithstanding the maximum Pell Grant amount provided under the heading "STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE" under this title.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this is a very modest amendment. It is targeted to a program which is a lifeline to millions of hard-working American families in the form of education—the Pell grant. The Pell grant is the major instrument by which the Federal Government provides help and assistance to needy families in this country. The median income among families who benefit from the grant is about \$24,000 a year and the median income of independent students who receive the grant is less than \$13,000 per year. These families need help and assistance in going to college.

This particular amendment will raise the Pell grant from \$4,050 to \$4,250. The cost of the amendment is approximately \$800 million.

I remind our colleagues of one of the great statements made in this country by an American Founding Father, John Adams, whose 270th birthday we celebrate this week. He was the architect of the Massachusetts State Constitution, written in 1780. Many of the ideas from that constitution have been accepted in constitutions all over the country. The one aspect that has been replicated in every State constitution is the State's commitment to educating children. It is said so well in the Massachusetts Constitution:

It will reward its patron and benefactors by shedding its benign influence on the public minds. Laws for the liberal education of youth, especially of the lower class of people, are so extremely wise and useful that to a humane and generous mind no expense for this purpose would be thought extravagant.

That is what this amendment says. We are saying this Nation, at this time, cannot afford to lose these young minds. We have 400,000 young Americans who are qualified and would be accepted to 4-year colleges on the basis of their academic records if they had the resources to be able to attend. It is an indictment of our Nation if we fail to provide these young people with an opportunity to receive an education, participate in our society, and give something back to our country. We cannot afford to lose them. The Pell grant is the indispensable link between these families and an education.

This Nation has always responded when challenged in the areas of education. In response to the Industrial Revolution, we made a national commitment to expand access to high schools, and America prospered. It was an extraordinary commitment and has made an extraordinary difference in the success of this Nation, both commercially and militarily.

At the time of World War II, we had 12 to 14 million Americans who served—many for 3, 5, 6, 7 years—in the Armed Forces of our country. When they returned, President Roosevelt offered the GI bill. That would open the doors of opportunity for education. For

all who came back from World War II, who had been out fighting for our Nation, they would have the benefits of an education. By the millions, they took advantage of the GI bill.

In reviewing the investment made by this Government, the figures show for every \$1 invested in education, it was returned seven times by those who received or benefitted from the GI bill. We extended education benefits in the time of the Vietnam war. Also, when challenged technologically in 1957 with the launch of Sputnik—we had a Republican President, Democratic Congress—we recognized the need to dramatically improve math and science achievement in this country. We passed the National Defense Education Act to strengthen both our national security and our global competitiveness, and the Federal investment in education doubled, with a strong focus on math and science education.

At that time the Federal Government was spending 5 cents out of every \$1 on education. Now we are at 1½ cents, and going south. Do we understand that? Only 1½ cents out of every Federal dollar is spent on education, and we are going, effectively, south. I think this is not the kind of priority the American people expect and the American people want. This is a very modest amendment, especially against that background. The amendment raises the maximum Pell grant by \$200.

Let me first show what has happened to the Pell grant over the period of recent years. Some of us remember the great debates we had in the 1960s. One of the principal issues in the 1960 campaign was: Should we provide help and assistance to young people in the form of education? That was heavily debated in the Presidential debates at that time. A judgment and decision was made when the votes were in and President Kennedy won. One of the first things he did was submit a higher education bill, which was eventually passed in 1965.

There was a great debate at that time: Should we provide help and assistance to the child or should we provide help and assistance to the university? The decision was made that we would provide it to the young student so the student would have the flexibility to be able to go to the college of their choice.

In 1965, when the higher education bill was passed, the Federal funding for education was close to 80 percent in grants and 20 percent in loans, for students who qualified for grants. Those were families in the lowest income bracket. The Pell grant was used extensively and benefitted millions of young people.

This chart shows what has happened with the Pell grant between 1985 and 2005. It shows the shrinking buying power of the Pell grant over the past 20 years. We find that during the 1985-1986 school year the maximum Pell grant covered 57 percent of the cost of attendance at a 4-year public institution.

We see, as the cost of education has gone up, that the purchasing power of the Pell grant has steadily declined. In the 2005-2006 school year the maximum grant covers only 33 percent of the cost of college attendance.

Look at this. This is a chart that shows the gap between the maximum Pell grant and the cost of attending college, which continues to increase. This is a reflection of the gradual increase in tuition over the recent years, from 2001 and 2002 up to 2005 and 2006. This shows the gap—now nearly \$8,100. Here, this green line shows the maximum Pell grant which has been effectively stable during that period of time, while the cost of attending a 4-year public college has been going up and up and up, putting enormous pressure on these families who have limited opportunities and resources.

The Federal Government provides Pell grants. It provides Stafford loans. States and local communities also provide help and assistance to students. Here is an indication of what is happening in our States. This chart reflects the State and local funding per full-time student at public institutions, which has declined some 16 percent since 2001.

What all of this says is that the purchasing power of the Pell grant has gone down. There are hundreds of thousands of children who are not going to college because they are unable to afford it. We have seen that the help and assistance given to needy students has dropped at the State and local levels, but the costs have been continuing to go higher and higher.

This amendment requires a judgment and decision about a nation's priorities: whether we believe, as a nation, in the importance of supporting education and making education available to all young people, and for which we are prepared to support this very modest increase.

It is useful to make a judgment based upon what we think we need here in the United States. But it is also relevant to get some idea about what is happening in other countries that are increasingly competing with the American economy. Here is an example. The numbers of engineering graduates in China and India far outpace that of the United States. In China, it is 600,000; in India, 350,000; in the United States, 70,000, and many of these are foreign students who, more likely than not, will be returning to their home countries.

We cannot expect to have a first-rate economy with a second-rate educational system. It does not work that way. Not only will we not have a first-rate economy, but we will not have a first-rate military with a second-rate educational system.

This is not going to be the answer to all of our problems in terms of education. Later in the debate we consider other amendments to increase support for education and to improve math and science achievement. But this amendment is essential to ensuring every